

News**World News Briefs****Unusual Dissent Erupts Inside Cuban Communist Party**

HAVANA (AP) — Days after President Barack Obama's historic visit, the leaders of Cuba's Communist Party are under highly unusual public criticism from their own ranks for imposing new levels of secrecy on the future of social and economic reforms.

After months of simmering discontent, complaints among party members have become so heated that its official newspaper, Granma, addressed them in a lengthy front-page article Monday, saying the public dissatisfaction is "a sign of the democracy and public participation that are intrinsic characteristics of the socialism that we're constructing."

The article did little to calm many party members, some of whom are calling for a Communist Party congress next month to be postponed to allow public de-

bate about the government's plans to continue market-oriented reforms for Cuba's centrally controlled economy.

"The base of the party is angry, and rightly so," party member and noted intellectual Esteban Morales wrote in a blog post published before Obama's visit. "We've gone backward in terms of democracy in the party, because we've forgotten about the base, those who are fighting and confronting our problems on a daily basis."

Across the country, Cuba's ruling party is facing stiff challenges as it tries to govern an increasingly cynical and disenchanted population.

US to Beef Up Military Presence in Eastern Europe Next February

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials say the Penta-



AP PHOTO/JAVIER GALEANO/FILE

In this April 19, 2011 file photo, Fidel Castro, left, and Cuba's President Raul Castro talk during the 6th Communist Party Congress in Havana, Cuba. Some party members are calling for the April 2016 congress to be postponed to allow public debate about the government's plans to continue market-oriented reforms of Cuba's centrally controlled economy.



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gon will be deploying an armored brigade combat team to Eastern Europe next February as part of the ongoing effort to rotate troops in and out of the region to reassure allies worried about threats from an increasingly aggressive Russia.

The officials said the Army will announce Wednesday that it will be sending a full set of equipment with the brigade to Europe. Earlier plans had called for the Pentagon to rotate troops into Europe, where they would have used a set of training equipment pre-positioned there.

The new proposal would remove the pre-positioned equipment, send it to be refurbished, and allow the

“Wednesday's announcement is also aimed at easing worries in Europe, where allies had heard rumblings about the pre-positioned equipment being removed and feared the U.S. was scaling back support

U.S. forces to bring more robust, modern equipment in with them when they deploy. There are about 4,500 soldiers in an armored brigade, along with dozens of heavy vehicles, tanks and other equipment.

Wednesday's announcement is also aimed at easing worries in Europe, where allies had heard rumblings about the pre-positioned equipment being removed and feared the U.S. was scaling back support.

Officials also said the Army would send additional communications equipment to Europe so that headquarters units could have the radios, computers and other equipment needed to work with the brigades.

Ally To Power Broker Suu Kyi Sworn in as Myanmar's President

NAYPYITAW, Myanmar (AP) — Htin Kyaw, a trusted friend of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, took over as Myanmar's president on Wednesday, calling it a "historic moment" in the country's long-drawn transition to democracy after decades of military rule.

In a day full of ceremony and symbolism, Htin Kyaw was sworn in along with his two vice presidents and 18-member Cabinet. Suu Kyi, the face of Myanmar's pro-democracy movement, takes on a prominent role as the country's new foreign minister and the head of three other ministries.

The swearing in was held in an austere hall of parliament, with lawmakers dressed in traditional costume. A few hours later, outgoing President Thein Sein shook hands with his successor and handed him a letter officially transferring power.

While it was a momentous day in the history of this impoverished Southeast Asian country, democracy still feels incomplete. The military retains considerable power in the government and parliament, and the president himself will play second fiddle to Suu Kyi, who has repeatedly said she will run the country from behind the scenes because the military has ensured — through a constitutional manipulation — that she cannot be the president.

Still, the day belonged to Htin Kyaw and Suu Kyi, who sat in the front row watching her confidant become head of a government she had long aspired to lead.

